

# DIABETES IN CHEROKEE COUNTY



SC Department of Health and Environmental Control

◆ Diabetes Control Program    ◆ Chronic Disease Epidemiology Branch  
Diabetes Initiative of South Carolina

Diabetes mellitus, a chronic disease characterized by elevated blood sugar levels, is a significant contributor to morbidity and mortality in South Carolina and throughout the United States. Diabetes can cause debilitating and costly complications such as blindness, renal failure, lower extremity amputations, and cardiovascular disease. Much of the health and economic burden of diabetes can be averted through known prevention measures.

In 1998, 5.7 percent of South Carolina adults, equivalent to approximately 163,000 adults, reported having been diagnosed with diabetes. Diabetes was the sixth leading cause of death in South Carolina claiming 1,029 lives in 1997 and contributing to another 3,014 deaths. This report presents the burden of diabetes in Cherokee county.

## Behavioral Risk Factors

Table 1 displays the prevalence of major behavioral risk factors for diabetes and its complications in Cherokee county and SC in 1998.

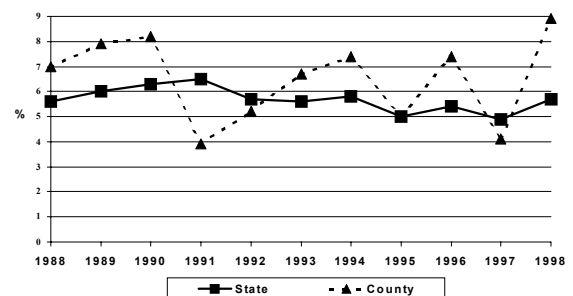
Table 1. Prevalence (%) of  
Behavioral Risk Factors for Diabetes

	Cherokee County	SC
Overweight	56.7	52.3
Current Smokers	27.3	24.7
Physical Inactivity	63.7	61.6
Consuming fruits and vegetables less than 5-A-Day	77.9	78.2
High Cholesterol (1997)	28.1	24.4
Hypertension (1997)	29.1	26.7

## Prevalence

In 1998, there were approximately 3,299 adults (8.9%) aged 18 and older living in Cherokee county who have been told by a doctor some time in their life that they have diabetes (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Prevalence of Self-Reported  
Diabetes among Adults, Cherokee, 1988-1998



## Morbidity and Complications

In 1997, there were 103 hospital discharges with diabetes as the primary diagnosis among Cherokee county residents. During the same year, there was an additional 716 hospital discharges with diabetes-related condition. African-Americans had 46 (44%) hospitalizations for diabetes as the primary diagnosis and 194 (27%) hospitalizations for diabetes as a related condition.

In 1997, hospital charges for hospitalizations of Cherokee county residents having diabetes as primary diagnosis were up to \$1.2 million and \$10.3 million for diabetes as a related condition. The total length of hospital stay for diabetes as the primary

diagnosis was 695 days.

Cherokee county patients with diabetes who had diabetes-related complications in 1997 included:

- 88 (10.8%) with renal manifestations;
- 23 (2.8%) with lower extremity amputations related to diabetes;
- 28 (3.4%) with diabetic ketoacidosis;
- 60 (7.3%) with renal failure;
- 19 (2.3%) with dialysis.

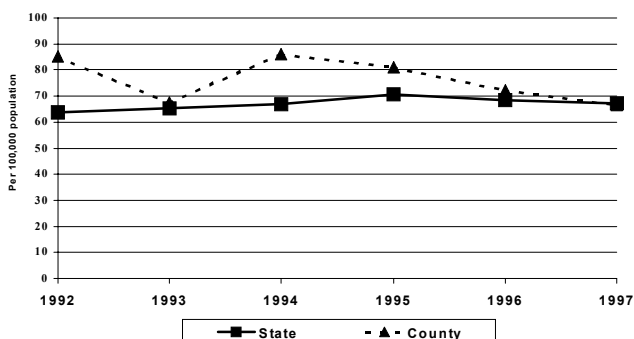
Adults with diabetes are at increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Out of 811 hospitalizations for patients with diabetes, 591 (72.8%) had cardiovascular diseases, and 92 (11.3%) had stroke.

In 1997, there were 34 emergency room (ER) visits for diabetes as the primary diagnosis, among which 15 (44%) were for African-American patients. In addition, there were 145 ER visits for diabetes as a related condition. Total ER charges for diabetes as the primary diagnosis was \$20,838.

## Mortality

In 1997, diabetes was listed as the underlying cause of death for 31 residents of Cherokee county. This is an age-standardized mortality rate of 48.4 per 100,000 population, higher than the state average of 39.2 per 100,000 population (Figure 2). Diabetes was listed as a contributing cause in 43 deaths in Cherokee county; a standardized mortality rate of 66.5 per 100,000 population.

Figure 2. Age-Adjusted Mortality Rate of Diabetes, Cherokee, 1992-1997



A total of 306 potential years of life were lost in 1997 because people died prematurely from diabetes. Diabetes mortality in Cherokee county follows the national pattern of diabetic mortality that African-Americans have higher mortality rates than whites. African-American women had the highest standardized mortality (177.4 per 100,000 population) among all race-sex groups.

## Cherokee County Resources

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